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The Complete Guide to Sun and Sunless Tanning

By Dirk Merkell

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Part-I: Introduction

1. Sun Tanning - An Overview

Sun tanning is the physiological response of your body from exposure to ultraviolet rays of the sun or of a sun bed. This results in slight darkening of your skin, commonly known as a tan. The tan is very evident in fair-skinned individuals. The sun is a storehouse of energy around 386 billion, billion megawatts. The sun's ultraviolet rays travel as UVB, UVA, and UVC. These rays display their highest intensity between ten in the morning and four in the evening.

What is UV?

The sun gives off ultraviolet radiation that is divided into categories based on the wavelength.

UVC - 100 to 290 nm

UVB - 290 to 320 nm

UVA - 320 to 400 nm

UVB

UVB affects the outer layer of skin, the epidermis, and is the primary agent responsible for sunburns.

UVB does not penetrate glass.

Related Resources

Of UVA, UVC, and UVB rays, UVC rays are the most dangerous. However; the earth's upper atmosphere absorbs it totally. UVA and UVB are dangerous too. They are responsible for damaging the DNA of

your skin cells and could be the main cause of skin cancer and skin tanning.

It is debatable whether sun tanning is good for you or not. The ultraviolet rays of sunshine are the main source of vitamin D, which makes your bones and muscles healthy. This vitamin also restricts growth and spread of cancerous tumors. Also, sunlight increases the functioning of the pineal gland in your brain. This produces tryptamines, which help you maintain your cheerfulness.

But, exposure to extreme sunlight is harmful as the ultraviolet rays can increase the possibility of eye cataracts. Too much exposure can also cause cancer of the skin and affect your DNA and white blood cells. When you expose your body to the sun's ultraviolet rays, the melanin content of your skin cells increases, which causes darkening or pigmentation of your skin. Both UVA and UVB rays act differently on your skin.

Effects of UVA and UVB rays

UVA rays are present all through the day and throughout the year too. Your clothing can largely block its effect. Excessive exposure can cause premature aging of your skin as it releases the pre-existing melanin from the melanocytes in your skin. Although UVA is not completely responsible for skin cancer, it causes melanoma, which is more harmful than skin cancer.

UVB rays are more prevalent in summer. Although moderate exposure to such rays is good, excessive exposure causes skin cancer and distortion of DNA strands. These rays are responsible for creation of new melanin in your skin. These rays can cause sunburns. You can cut down their effects by using sunscreens.

Is Sun Tanning Fashionable?

Acceptance of a suntan as a fashion has been popular at different times through history. Ancient Roman women used various cosmetics with a lead base to intentionally lighten the color of their skin. Women of Shakespearean times felt tanned skin to denote lower status. Therefore, women of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had greater preference for fair and clear skin. For them, fair skin signified nobility. Dark skin denoted people of the working class like those working in fields and farms.

However, ideas started changing in the twentieth century. An accidental dark tan by a well-known fashion designer signaled affinity for tanned skin among the higher stratas of society. Therefore, tanned skin now denoted more status and wealth.

However, over-exposure of your skin to acquire a good tan is dangerous. The American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) issued a warning against such excessive exposure to ultraviolet rays in 1985. Such exposure was responsible for most of the deaths due to

malignant melanoma and cell carcinoma. Yet, teens of today prefer a tanned look as they feel it looks more athletic and healthy.

Many teens do not heed the warnings of their parents about the sun, simply because they are young, and the idea of aging skin 20 years down the road, does not concern them. After all, that is for old people to worry about.

And, of course, they won't get cancer, because teens feel invincible to death and deadly diseases.

It's why teens take chances with unprotected sex and drive their cars too fast. Most "normal" people recall being a "normal" teenager. The best way to learn, to them, is to find out on their own. You probably did "dangerous things as a youth", I know I sure did.

III Effects of Sun Tanning

Sun tanning is responsible for sunburns, eye problems, melanoma, skin cancer and much more damage to your skin. Therefore, many try to use specific products to get a tan without any exposure to sun. However, insufficient exposure to sunlight can cause a deficiency of vitamin D in your body. This causes many deficiency-related problems like bone pain, difficulty in lifting weights and, sometimes, fractures.

Ultraviolet rays are beneficial in treating skin conditions like vitiligo and psoriasis. Therefore, a little exposure can help you reap the beneficial effects of UVA rays.

Certain preventive measures can help you reap benefits of ultraviolet rays without experiencing their ill effects.

The liberal use of sunscreen creams can lessen the harmful effects of ultraviolet rays. Such screens should be non-comedogenic and hypo-allergenic. They should have a high-level of SPF content to offer better protection.

Such creams can offer protection even if you only apply small amounts. An SPF 30 can provide sufficient protection against the harmful effects of sunlight. Sportspersons need to apply sweat-proof and waterproof sunscreens. They should repeat the application every two to three hours.



Use sunglasses with anti-UV lenses. This prevents such rays from entering your eyes. Ultraviolet radiation is higher in high altitudes as the sun's rays have greater power. Water-skiers can be affected just like snow skiers are because both snow and water are good reflective surfaces for ultraviolet rays. Therefore, take all necessary precautions to protect yourself from such radiations.

Conclusion

Moderate sun exposure is beneficial to your skin and health.

Therefore, avoid staying for long hours in the sun and discourage your children from playing for too long in the sun. If you cannot avoid going out in the sun, protect yourself by using any effective barrier cream.

If you notice changes in your moles (enlargements or bleeding), or any other form of skin ulcer, take immediate medical help to prevent future problems.

Take special caution with infants; they should not be exposed more than 15 minutes in the sun; their skin is very tender.

2. History of Sun Tanning

Sun is and has always been an integral part of human life on earth. Copernicus pointed to the Sun as the main source of energy for life on earth. Such obeisance to the Sun has given it a Godlike status. The early people and the earliest civilizations emphasized the importance of the Sun on life and growth of crops. Egyptians worshipped the sun god Ra while the Japanese sun goddess was Amaterasu. Shamash was the Sumerian sun god and people in Peru and Mexico built temples and monuments in honor of the sun and its rays.

The sun was the main energy-giver. Therefore, Native Americans, like the Anasazi Indians of New Mexico looked to the sun as their father. Many Plains Indians performed dances to appease the sun god and Hopis prayed and made merry for the sun. Everything on earth needs sun and sunlight for its survival and existence.

The Greeks were the first to treat many illnesses by exposure to sun. The sun, to them, was a life-giving force and heliotherapy, or sunbathing, was a wonderful cure for many ailments. Even small insects like cockroaches secrete hormones only in sunlight.

Skin Color as the Differentiator

Skin color became the great differentiator between different classes of society. Pale skin denoted superior classes while darker skin denoted the menial or working class. These people had to work for long hours in the sun and, therefore, developed a darker tan to their skin color. Similarly, many ancient Roman and Greek women used chalks and lead paints to color their faces. However, this often caused death due to slow lead-poisoning.

Again, some preferred arsenic treatment for whitening their skin, which was another deadly mode of treatment. Some French and Englishwomen used false beauty marks or painted thin lines on their

foreheads to get an image of a very clear skin. All these distinctions and parameters also found their way to America. Hence, pale skin was the norm until the twentieth century.

Growth of Popularity of the Suntan

Sun-tanning acquired its present popularity due to its accidental acquisition by French designer Coco Chanel (1883-1971) en route from Paris to Cannes on a yacht. Then, along came Josephine Baker who had a slight wheat tone to her skin. She was idolized as a singer. It was about that time that women started developing many outdoor interests like lawn tennis, picnics, hiking and other activities in the sun.

Slowly, the tan became a fashion statement. European women started exposing their skin to the sun and used beige creams and powders to add color to parts of their skin. Additionally, clothing and accessories were in tandem to their tan.

Bathing costumes did not cover legs while women wore shoes without stockings. Sporting a suntan became the fashion and style statement of the rich and wealthy. People also went for special vacations to warm places, to get a tan during winter. Cosmetic companies started developing different suntan oils and creams to promote sun tanning.

Continuation of the Fashion Statement

Little did they realize that their suntan could be the cause of skin cancer in their later years. The American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) came out with the first warning in 1985 against such over-exposure to sun.

That warning claimed tanning as unsafe and a possible cause of skin damage like cancer, melanoma and other serious ailments.

Indoor tanning was the next step, but the medical community does not propagate tanning as safe. Despite all warnings, many continue to bask in the sun on a sunny day, without caring one iota for the dangerous after-effects of such exposure.

Part-II: Understanding Sun Tanning

3. What is Tanning?

Sun tanning is darkening of your skin due to pigmentation occurring because of exposure to the sun's rays or use of a sun bed. Sunlight reaches the Earth in the form of heat or infrared rays, visible light, and ultraviolet rays. The ultraviolet rays arrive as UVA, UVB, or UVC.

However, UVC does not reach the earth and UVA and UVB cause the maximum damage. Most problems, like sunburns, cancer, wrinkles and premature aging occur due to UVB.

How does your skin tan?

Ultraviolet radiation increases the melanin content present in your skin. Melanocytes produce melanin and these protect you from excessive radiation of the sun. However, UVA and UVB are the triggers for increasing melanin production.

Although your clothing can block UVA rays to some extent, other sunscreens cannot block the effects of these rays. These rays can also cause melanoma, which is more dangerous than skin cancer. Such rays are present throughout the day.

UVB rays are most active between ten and two in the afternoon. Just ten minutes of exposure to such rays is sufficient to stimulate the necessary vitamin D in your body cells. However, all sunscreens can block the effect of these rays.

Snow and sand reflect ultraviolet radiation. Hence, you can get a suntan by skiing on a sunny day or while exposing your skin on a beach. However, glass absorbs ultraviolet radiation totally. You cannot get sunburn in a glasshouse.

4. The Science of Suntans - How Tanning Works

The sun can help you get a tan or leave you with sunburns. It all depends on how you expose your skin to get a tan or how you protect your skin against sunburn. Over-exposure or exposure without proper preventive lotions and sunscreens can leave you sunburned. Nevertheless, planned and confined exposure can give you a suntan over a period of time.

Acceptance of Suntan

Many people love a suntan. To them, it's a mark of health and vitality. It appears to make women look more slender and men to appear manly.

You can get a suntan and still protect yourself from the sun's rays.

What are the Effects of Exposure to Sunlight?

The rays of sunlight travel to earth in three different forms; infrared, perceptible sunlight and the ultraviolet rays. Of these, the ultraviolet rays are most responsible for suntan. Again, the ultraviolet rays arrive in three main categories:

UVA traveling 315 to 400 nm (nanometer – one billionth of a metre) is responsible for suntan. Many refer to it as black light.

UVB traveling 280 to 315 nm is responsible for sunburns.

UVC traveling 100 to 280 nm does not reach you as the topmost atmospheric layers of earth absorb these rays.

Therefore, the maximum radiation of ultraviolet rays is through UVA and UVB. Although, previously, researchers cited only UVB rays as the main cause for skin cancer, wrinkles, aging and other skin ailments, recent findings indicate both UVA and UVB as equally responsible for all such ailments.

Working of Sunlight in the Creation of Suntan

The onus of creating a suntan lies with melanin, a pigment found in melanocyte cells of your skin. This dark pigment also offers protection against excessive ultraviolet radiation.

Melanocyte cells of your skin produce melanin regularly. The ultraviolet rays have the ability to activate an increase in such production. The melanocyte cells produce newer granules of melanin deep within your skin. Slowly, these new granules arrive at the upper cell layers of your skin, close to the surface of your skin. Over a period of five to seven days of regular exposure to sunlight, the amount of this dark colored pigment -melanin - builds up and appears as a darker skin. This is Suntan. Such higher concentration of melanin also protects you from excessive radiation of ultraviolet rays of the sun, as they absorb ultraviolet radiation in sunlight.

The melanocyte cells are almost the same in fair and dark-skinned people. In people with a natural dark skin, these cells have a more even spread over the skin. Therefore, melanin production in such melanocyte cells is higher and continuous, making their skin color darker. They do not need any stimulation to increase melanin production. Besides, melanin offers a protective covering to dark-skinned people from the ultraviolet rays of the sun. Therefore, incidence of skin cancer and other skin ailments is comparatively lower among such dark-skinned people.

However, if you have an uneven distribution of melanin in your skin cells, you develop freckles. Freckles are dark-colored spots or regions occurring due to concentration of melanin pigment at these places.

How long to get a Suntan?

You need to expose your skin for a considerable amount of time to get the requisite tan. Melanocytes do not start production of melanin immediately in sunlight. It needs sustained exposure for few hours

and spread over few days. Therefore, tanning is not a one-day process. Instead, you need around a week's continuous exposure for a few hours daily to get the requisite tan. This is sufficient time for the build-up of a protective melanin layer to guard you against ultraviolet radiation.

Is Sun Tanning a Universal Process?

Melanocytes produce two main types of pigments; **phaeomelanin** with yellow and red and **eumelanin**, which is predominantly brown. Redheads have a higher concentration, and production of, phaeomelanin. Therefore, it is highly unusual for a redhead to get a decent suntan.

Albinos lack the special enzyme-Tyrosinase. Therefore, the chemical reaction necessary for the production of melanin is unable to function without this enzyme. Hence, albinos lack melanin, not only in their skin but in their irises and hair too.

An excess of anything can be harmful. Excessive exposure of your skin to sunlight and ultraviolet rays can cause skin cancer and various other skin ailments.

You may not experience these ailments at the time of trying for a tan. Your skin could endure most of the effects of these ailments, say, a few decades later.

5. The Benefits of Sunlight

Exposure of sunlight is beneficial, although it should be restricted. The sun is the main source of formation of Vitamin D in your body. Ergosterol is a natural steroid in your body. Ultraviolet rays, UVB, convert these steroids into vitamin D.

It takes just ten minutes of exposure to sunlight to supply the requisite amount of vitamin D to your body. Vitamin D is essential to boost body immune system and strengthen your bones and muscles. Sunlight stimulates production and supply of calcium in your body.

Lack of adequate Vitamin D can cause rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis, thyroiditis and other autoimmune diseases. Exposure to sunlight can also offer you protection against cancers of the stomach, colon, breast, prostate gland, ovary, womb, and bladder. It also helps in stopping the spread of cancerous tumors.

Again, sunlight is the main stimulant for your pineal gland. This gland, located at the base of the brain, produces different chemicals called tryptamines. Melatonin is one such tryptamine, which helps you understand the changing seasons and the occurrence of day and night.

Sunlight is responsible for producing certain chemicals which help keep your mood on a cheerful note. This helps keep depression at bay. Besides, many suffer from depression due to suppression of serotonin during cold days and months.

Therefore, sunlight can relieve you of such depression and ailments. However, avoid over-exposure to sunlight.

6. The Dangers of Sunshine

Ultraviolet radiation of the sun's rays is harmful. You can get sunburn if you expose your skin to the sun's rays for just half an hour. Ultraviolet radiation is also often the main cause for **skin cancer**. Besides, such radiation can also cause **melanoma**, which is fatal. It is, therefore, essential to protect young babies from the sun's rays. Researchers have established a likely connection between childhood sunburns and the incidence of melanoma in later life.

Ordinary exposure of your skin to sunlight can **damage skin cells and their DNA** as well. Some cells have the capacity to rebuild, by repairing their DNA, while some die. Cells that are incapable of repairing their DNA may turn into defective cancerous cells. These cause skin cancer in later years. Some cells become incapable of repairing their DNA due to a weak immune system. Such a **weak immune system** could be due to ultraviolet radiation or to other factors.

Exposure to sunlight is responsible for a significant **incidence of cataracts in eyes**. People experiencing prolonged sunlight exposure are four times more susceptible to cataracts. Cataracts are among the most common causes for blindness.

Sunlight often causes **allergic reactions** in many people. Sun allergies are common as polymorphic light eruptions. These are small and red itchy eruptions on your skin, similar to prickly heat. Such eruptions are common in fair-skinned women.

You can develop such an eruption even from sunlight coming through your window.

7. Effects of Sun Tanning

Nowadays, most people prefer having a tan and go to great lengths to get a perfect tan. Tanning is a fashion statement these days.

However, tanning needs to be within limits. Not all of us require the same amount of sun exposure to produce a great tan. It all depends on your skin type, color and other inherent factors. Therefore, just basking in the sun without sufficient information and knowledge about tanning can do more harm than good.

The ultraviolet rays of the sun - UVA and UVB - stimulate the melanocyte cells of your skin. The cells then increase the production of melanin, which is the pigment responsible for the color of your skin. Increased production of melanin leads to a darker shade of your skin color, a suntan.

However, such melanin also offers protection against the harmful ultraviolet rays by acting as a cover. Nevertheless, excessive exposure can cause sunburns and damage the DNA of the skin cells.

Effects of Sun Tanning

Tanning requires exposure to the sun's rays for a number of hours for around a week or little more. Although this exposure can lend you to the tan that you want, it makes your skin more susceptible to skin cancer in the later years of your life.

Fair-skinned, or pale-skinned, people need less hours of exposure to get a good tan. Such people run a higher risk of skin cancer as the melanin content in their skin is low. The low amount of melanin shows in the fair color to their skin. Besides, lesser melanin means lower protection from the ultraviolet rays of the sun during exposure to sun. Sun blockers are essential to curb such harmful effects of sun exposure.

Prolonged hours of sun exposure without proper protection can cause swelling and inflammation of your skin. Your skin is a tender organ and the harsh rays of the sun can lead to peeling and blistering. The Sun's rays could be UVA or UVB rays. Both rays are harmful and detrimental to the health of your skin.

Your skin is the largest organ on your body.

Long hours of exposure to sun can warm up your body considerably, thereby increasing body temperature. You tend to lose much of the water content of your body. This is often the cause of dehydration, heat strokes and sunstrokes, which can make you mildly to seriously sick.

The Sun's ultraviolet rays are harmful for your eyes and may cause cataracts. Besides, these rays also lower the immune system of your body.

The sun's rays also destroy the collagen layer of your skin. This layer is responsible for maintaining the elasticity of your skin. Lower collagen levels cause wrinkles to appear prematurely. Suntan ages the skin and it is difficult to do away or reverse the aging effect.

The suntan is responsible for those unwanted wrinkles right in the prime of your youth.

Excessive exposure to the sun for tanning can cause far-reaching effects. Your skin develops blotches and freckles. Besides, it loses its suppleness and evenness. Spots appear all over your skin and face. Your hands face the brunt of sun exposure. They become hard and dry.

How to Counteract the Effects of Sun Tanning

Tanning is not a safe option for skin-care. Even a little tanning may cause some harm. However, some are willing to bear with small discomforts to get the tanned look.

Normally, the power of rays from the sun is at the maximum between ten in the morning and four in the evening. You may be able to avoid all outdoor work during such time. Otherwise, try to spend minimum time-out in the sun and use proper and adequate sunscreens. Ultraviolet radiation is higher at higher latitudes and places near the equator as the cloud and air cover there is thinner.

Your sunscreen should be capable of blocking both UVA and UVB rays. Such sunscreens are broad-spectrum sunscreens. If you have to spend considerable time outdoors, repair your sunscreen every two hours. If you are under the direct rays of the sun, sunscreen with a higher SPF can be the best protection. Sportspersons should use sweat-proof and waterproof sunscreens.

Sun blocks are most essential for pale-skinned or very fair-skinned persons. You also need to use sunscreens with very high levels of SPF.

Sunscreens are your best shelters to protect your skin from the harmful effects of UVA and UVB rays. Sunscreens help you stay in the sun for longer periods. Every sunscreen has a specific sun protection factor, which is SPF. If you normally sit in the sun for fifteen minutes daily to get a tan without burning, you need to apply sunscreen with an SPF of 15.

Check your sunglasses to make sure they offer 100% protection against ultraviolet radiation.

Certain antibiotics, acne medications and antidepressants may cause allergies if you expose your body to the sun's rays. Therefore, check

with your medical provider if any of your medicines cause higher sensitivity to light.

Always try to cover the bare parts of your skin while out in the sun. Wear long sleeved shirts, full skirts, pants, and cover your head with a brimmed hat.

8. Is Tanning Healthy?

'Is Tanning Healthy?' is a question under intense debate between dermatologists and tanning supporters. Tanning produces a brownish tinge to your skin color, which is meant to protect you from the sun. It also has its own benefits. Sunlight is the main source of vitamin D in your body. It boosts your energy and blood oxygen levels. It is helpful in reducing joint pain and improves your muscular abilities.

Sunlight, to some extent, can fight the growth of cancerous cells. Again, sunlight stimulates action of the pineal gland, which helps keep you in good spirits. Sunlight can fight away depression and many other mental ailments. In these contexts, tanning is a healthy option, no doubt.

How healthy is Tanning?

Nevertheless, branding tanning as a healthy option is unjustified. Anything in excess is always harmful. Therefore, exposing to too much sun is bad for your health. Some go to specific locations for vacations to get a tan. Excessive sun exposure can cause sunburns and ruin your skin. Therefore, you need to obtain no more than a moderate tan.

Many argue that sun exposure is not the main cause for melanoma. Some others argue that studies reveal that tanning is not the cause for malignant melanoma. Since there is no conclusive evidence to prove either way, it is best to adopt controlled tanning and not go overboard.

The number of premature deaths due to a deficiency of vitamin D in the US is into the thousands. Besides that, many children are susceptible to fractures, bone pains, and other muscular ailments due to lack of sufficient Vitamin D in their bodies. Although tanning stimulates the production of Vitamin D in your body, exposing young

babies to sun for long periods can cause sunburns. Hence, moderation holds the key.

Again, often, ultraviolet radiation is the medical treatment for many skin conditions like vitiligo and psoriasis. Doctors use the rays in a controlled manner to help you gain their beneficial effects.

Before going for tanning, use sunscreen creams and lotions with relevant SPF or Sun Protection Factor. These help negate harmful effects of the sun's rays.

However, you need to check the relevant sunscreens for the available protection. Many advertise full protection against UVA and UVB rays but they may not provide it in reality. Therefore, it is best to use sunscreens with a higher SPF. Besides, liberal usage of such creams and lotions can help you gain full benefits. Again, apply the cream evenly, as irregular application can tan your skin in blotches.

Sunscreens need to be noncomedogenic and hypoallergenic to prevent blockage of skin pores. These protect you from rashes or acne.

Reflective surfaces like water and snow can increase ultraviolet radiation. This brings specific harm to your eyes. Therefore, wear proper sunglasses while skiing on a sunny day.

Cover your body fully and wear proper accessories like hats while going out in the sun. Avoid outings between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., as the sun's rays are the most severe during this period.

The debate whether tanning is healthy or not is a very subjective matter. It is therefore best to adopt moderate tanning practices to reap full benefits of sun exposure without harboring any serious ill effects of such exposure to sun.

9. The Darker Side of Sun and Sunless Tanning

There is no doubt that tanning is popular. People smoke cigarettes and drink alcohol, too. There are vast warnings on drinking alcohol and smoking cigarettes and chewing tobacco.

Sun and Sunless Tanning

Tanning can occur due to exposure to the direct rays of the sun. The ultraviolet rays of the sun stimulate melanocyte cells in the skin. These produce more melanin, the natural coloring pigment in your skin. Higher production of melanin increases or darkens your skin color, creating the needed tan. Melanin also offers protection against burning of your skin and ultraviolet radiation of the sunrays. This is **tanning in the sun**.

Otherwise, you can acquire a tan in indoor tanning salons and booths or apply various tanning products. Many people make use of the indoor tanning booths to acquire a tan in the winter months. Indoor tanning booths use various devices like sunlamps and tanning beds that emit ultraviolet rays similar to those of the sun which help you to get a tan. This is **sunless tanning**.

Recently, cosmetic companies have come up with a 'sunless spray', recommended for external use only and containing DHA - the color additive dihydroxyacetone. This color additive reacts with the dead skin cells on the surface to make the outermost layer of the skin a shade darker. This gives the required tan.

However; you should exercise extreme caution while applying such creams. It should never come anywhere near your eyes, mouth or nose. Chance ingestion or inhalation may have unknown risks. Therefore, the F.D.A. suggests the use of special protective measures for the eyes, nose, and mucous membranes.

Tanning in the sun and Sunless Tanning each have some drawbacks. According to medical reports, tanning is not a healthy option. Similarly, sunless tanning is also not good for your health or the quality of your skin.

Side-effects of Sunless Tanning

The American Medical Association (A.M.A.) and the A.A.D. issue warnings against the use of tanning equipment for getting a tan. Doctors warn against the various health hazards due to such equipment.

Tanning booth suppliers and operators say that the ultraviolet rays of sunlamps and sun beds are safe. However, these lamps often emit stronger rays than those of the sun and therefore could be more harmful.

The Food and Drug Administration discourages the use of tanning beds and sunlamps. It also issues strict regulations for labeling of sunscreen products. It takes strict action against deceptive claims, false and misleading advertisements.

Tanning booths use special products to induce a tan. Most of these products may not offer any protection from skin ailments, allergies and diseases.

Similarly, those people who are using antibiotics like tetracycline and birth control pills develop a higher sensitivity to light. Diabetics and lupus patients should avoid exposure to strong light and sun.

Some companies market-tanning pills. These contain the color additive canthaxanthin. This can turn your skin color orange or brown. Excessive ingestion of the pill (in your enthusiasm to get a quick tan) can land you in trouble. These might damage the retinas of your eyes, causing canthaxanthin retinopathy. This causes yellow deposits in your retina. It may also cause severe itching and liver problems.

Side-effects of Tanning in the Sun

Sunlight comes in the form of three different ultraviolet rays; UVA, UVB, and UVC. The Earth's atmosphere absorbs UVC before it reaches you. You normally encounter UVA and UVB rays while tanning in the sun.

Both UVA and UVB rays are harmful to your skin. They may cause wrinkles, damage DNA of some skin cells, cause skin cancer and produce signs of premature aging of your skin. They may also affect the body's immune system, resulting in different nervous disorders. These rays are harmful to your eyes and can lead to cataracts.

Experts often recommend use of sunscreens to avoid the ill effects of sun tanning. You should only buy products of reputable companies. Some sunscreens may not have enough active ingredient in them. If you use these and go in the sun to get a tan, you only receive sunburns that can cause skin cancer.

Skin damage can take years to rebuild and seems to be a possible cause for many other illnesses and diseases.

Normally, you should use sunscreen creams and lotions with a high S.P.F. - Sun Protection Factor. You should apply sunscreens liberally on your skin twenty to thirty minutes before venturing into the sunlight. If you need to stay outdoors, you should reapply every two hours. A sunscreen with a higher SPF factor lends greater protection against the ultraviolet rays. The minimum SPF needs to be 15 for a sunscreen cream to be effective and safe.

Check all sunscreen products for labels offering protection against UVA and UVB rays. This is 'double spectrum protection.'

Tanning in the sun exposes your skin to the ultraviolet rays of the sun. These can cause malignant melanoma over time. You could suffer from this form of serious, and sometimes fatal skin cancer as much as

a decade later. Skin cancer cases are showing an alarming increase over the years in the United States. Statistics hint at over a million cases of skin cancer.

Often, young people are unable to see any of the ill effects, like wrinkles or blotches, from tanning. They, therefore, indulge in sun-tanning regularly. Although they look and feel fine now, they will face the ill effects after a few years.

Regular exposure to the sun before the age of eighteen can cause serious and permanent damage to your skin. Sagging skin, wrinkles, freckles, blotches and eye cataracts are some of the damage sometimes due to sun tanning.

Many are under the misconception that the sun's rays of the summer season are the most damaging. However; ultraviolet rays are very damaging not only in the equatorial regions but also at higher altitudes. Such ultraviolet rays can cause sufficient harm even during the winter months and cloudy days.

Preventive Measures against Possible Suntan

Be careful with all outdoor activities between ten in the morning and four in the evening. This is the time when the sun emits the strongest rays.

Provide full protection to your eyes from the sun's rays by using sunglasses with 100% sun protection.

Cover all parts of your body by wearing full-sleeved shirts, pants, or skirts. Similarly, wear brimmed hats to offer protection to your eyes and head.

Go for a thorough check-up if you experience any allergic reactions due to exposure to the sun. Check with your dermatologist if you view

any unusual mole or anything unusual with an existing mole, scaly patch or some other skin rashes.

The Recent Remedy for Suntan

If you do want to go for a suntan, you can try to develop a tan without any damage to your skin. Sunless fake tan offers the ideal solution. This is a temporary tan. You can apply such a spray or lotion on your skin and develop a tan, lasting for a few days. Thereafter, you can reapply to get another temporary tan. These lotions are safe and affordable.

10. Sun Tanning and Melanoma

What is Melanoma?

Melanoma is a serious and often fatal form of skin cancer. Melanoma affects melanocyte cells of the skin. Such cells are predominant in your skin and eyes. Therefore, melanoma is a malignant tumor that occurs as a skin cancer.

What causes Melanoma?

Ultraviolet radiation of the sun's rays is the main cause for melanoma. Sun tanning from the sun's rays or sun beds can cause melanoma.

The Main Casualties of Melanoma

Melanoma affects women more than men. The incidence is higher in girls and women aged 15 and above. Women over eighty are also very susceptible to melanoma. There has been a constant increase in its incidence over the years.

If you have many moles on your body and you love getting a tan, you run a high risk of getting melanoma. If you have moles, you can notice some changes in the shape, color, and size of your moles after excessive exposure to the sun. Abnormally shaped moles or moles bleeding after exposure to sun can indicate melanoma.



Fair-skinned people with red hair have relatively lower melanin content in their skin. They have lesser protection against the ultraviolet rays of the sun. Therefore, they can contract melanoma easily. Although dark-skinned or black people can also contract melanoma, it is a rare occurrence. They have a natural protection against the harmful ultraviolet rays. Statistics reveal that there is only one African or Asian in every five-melanoma patients.

Similarly, people with a tendency to sunburn or those who become red and peel before getting a tan in the sun have a higher risks of melanoma. Normally, people diagnosed with melanoma have had many incidences of sunburns in their lives.

Children that have sunburns in their childhood, can develop melanoma in their later years. Fair-skinned people born in hot countries may be more likely to contract melanoma than their counterparts in cold countries. This is because they have had sun exposure in their childhood when the skin is at its softest and most delicate stages.

A family history of melanoma can indicate a higher risk as skin colors, types, and qualities are very similar and therefore, the chances are higher.

Sun beds pose a huge risk of melanoma. Sun beds are a recent invention and the effect of sun beds is still under observation. These beds use ultraviolet rays of the UVA kind. These rays are responsible for all types of skin cancer. Therefore, sun beds are a potential threat.

Children and youngsters below the age of twenty using sun beds regularly report more incidences of melanoma.

Risks of melanoma are higher in people who go out in the sunlight occasionally. People working outdoors face the ultraviolet rays of the sun regularly. However, people predominantly working indoors, but going out to spend some time getting a suntan or just indulging in their outdoor hobbies run a greater chance of contracting melanoma.

However, all these factors are just probabilities. It is not certain that, if you sport some of these symptoms, you are a sure victim of melanoma. These are indicators that may help you understand the

chances of occurrence of melanoma and encourage you to adopt suitable precautions against them.

Use of Sunscreens

Sunscreen creams and lotions do not carry any risk of melanoma or increase existing symptoms. Sunscreens help you stay in the sunlight for longer periods. However, you should not be using such creams and lotions regularly to help you stay for prolonged periods in the sun.

Researchers and scientists are still unable to establish any relation between hormones and melanoma. Although women have a higher risk of melanoma, hormones do not seem to play any part in it at all. Pregnancy, birth control pills, or hormone replacement therapy does not have any relation with incidences or occurrence of melanoma. Medical research is still ongoing to determine all aspects of melanoma; its incidence, effects, and available remedies. But it is obvious that early detection of melanoma can help you secure better medical help and even may save your life.

11. The Dangers of Sunstroke and Dehydration

Exposure to very hot temperatures may cause sunstroke due to dehydration of your body. Sunstroke is the result of a collapse of your body's inner mechanism so that it is unable to function normally due to very high temperatures.

High temperatures cause heat exhaustion in the form of headaches, fatigue, dizziness, muscle cramps, rapid pulse and breathing.

Drinks can help overcome such symptoms of dehydration and heat exhaustion but avoid salt pills.

The symptoms of impending sunstroke are an absence of sweating, high body temperature, hot and flushed skin, and loss of consciousness. A dehydrated body that is unable to cool itself may result in death if all vital systems; lungs, heart, brain, and kidneys, suffer a sudden stoppage.

The best way to combat sunstroke is to cool down the body with a cold-water bath and then rush the person to the hospital.

Part-III: Different Methods of Tanning

12. Sunless Tanning Methods

If you want to get a tan without going out in the sun, you can adopt any of the different sunless tanning methods. The sunless tanning sprays and gels help you get a tan by affecting the color of your epidermis, the outer layer of your skin. Different sunless tanning techniques produce a tan by changing the color of the outermost layer of epidermis while the sun's rays penetrate deep into the innermost layer of your epidermis. Therefore, a sun's tan is more long lasting than other sunless tanning methods.

Sunless tanning methods offer a tanning solution for people of all ages and categories. However, such tanning methods do not have the health benefits of sunlight. You definitely need to expose yourself to the sunlight for around ten to fifteen minutes, twice a week, to help your skin form the requisite vitamin D in your body. Vitamin D is necessary for the upkeep of your bones, muscles, body immune system and proper cell growth. Synthetic tanning methods cannot create vitamin D within your body.

There are many different ways to get a tan without basking in the sun:

1. Sunless Tanning Booths

Tanning booths are in high demand these days. These booths use an airbrush system with an air compressor to tan your skin. This is a comparatively new technique of sunless tanning. This is as popular as spray tanning too. Airbrushes spray a tanning lotion to change the color of your skin.

Airbrush has many compartments within it, containing a tanning liquid called dihydroxyacetone (DHA). FDA approves of the contents of this

liquid and declares it safe for tanning your skin. The different pistons in the air compressor push out air through a nozzle in the spray head or airbrush. This combines with the tanning liquid within the airbrush and sprays a fine layer over your epidermis. You can retain your tanned look for around a week.

Most tanning booths have around 36 airbrushes connected to the air compressor. Some of these are in a fixed position while some are in a moving position. You can remain under the fixed sprayers to get a tan all over your body. Otherwise, you can use a moving airbrush to tan specific parts of your body. Sometimes the moving airbrushes have different mechanical problems.

Airbrush tanning does not offer any long-lasting effect. Soon after a spray, you can wash off the color with soap and water. You can use this system to get a quick tan to attend any special events or programs.

Airbrush tanning does not stimulate your skin to tan. It is suitable for all skin types.

2. Sunless Bronzers

Sunless bronzers are available in the form of powders and moisturizers to help you get a tan. Application is easy and simple. You just have to apply these bronzers like your make-up to attain a tanned appearance. Sunless bronzers offer only a temporary tan. You can easily wash off the bronzers with soap and water.

You should be careful while applying bronzers to prevent any staining of your clothes. Similarly, take care that these powders and moisturizers do not smudge while applying. You can use protective eyewear and clothing to prevent any accidents. If you wear such moisturizers outside, take care to check if they contain sunscreens among their ingredients.

3. Tanning Lamps

Tanning lamps are special tanning equipment that emit ultraviolet rays. The rays from these lamps are similar to those coming from the sun. Therefore, you need to safeguard yourself against the negative effects of ultraviolet rays while using tanning lamps to create a tan. Simple measures to check any negative impact are to strictly adhere to the recommended time and number of sessions, wear proper safety eyewear, place a protective acrylic layer between your skin and the lamp's rays and follow all instructions on the booklet on how to use the tanning lamps for a good tan.

It is best to have tanning sessions only on alternate days.

4. Self-Tanning Lotions

Self-tanning lotions offer the simplest way to acquire a tan. These lotions contain dihydroxyacetone or DHA. This colorless sugar reacts with the amino acids of your body to produce melanoidins. These melanoidins are brown in color and therefore, your skin acquires a brown color.

You can apply the lotion only to the topmost layer of your skin. As new skin appears, the old skin loses its color and tan. Therefore, you need to re-apply according to the instructions for that lotion. These lotions are the most common and effective way of obtaining a tan without venturing into the sun. You can get the needed tan within a few hours.

There are no known dangers of self-tanning lotions. However, chances of allergic reactions persist. Pregnant women should avoid the use of self-tanning lotions. Some cheaper varieties of such tanning lotions contain certain herbal extracts, vitamins, and minerals. However, such cheap lotions do not always deliver the desired effects.

You need to follow certain precautions while applying self-tanning lotions. Use appropriate gloves to prevent your fingers and palms from

staining with the color of the lotion. Always apply in a circular motion and apply sufficient to get the needed tan. Uneven application causes streaking of the lotion resulting in an improper tan. Reapplying can make things worse. After proper application, wipe off any excess lotion from the knees and other vulnerable areas with a damp tissue.

5. Tanning Beds

Most tanning salons have tanning beds with tanning lamps and bulbs to help you get a tan indoors. These bed lamps use UVB and UVC rays to get the requisite tan within few weeks of use. You can use the tanning bed at your home too. However, it is an expensive venture, as you need sufficient tanning lamps, bulbs and tanning bed lotions to achieve the desired result.

Normally, Wolff tanning beds are among the best buys. Regular and proper use of a tanning bed delivers a more lasting tan than other sunless tanning methods.

6. Tanning Pills

The F.D.A. does not approve the use of tanning pills. These pills contain canthaxanthin, a coloring pigment. Ingestion of the pill makes your skin turn brown or orange. However, side effects of this pill may be very serious and far-reaching. They may cause severe itching, liver problems and eye disorders. Many countries have withdrawn approval for the use of such tanning pills.

7. Tanning Accelerators

There are certain tanning accelerators available in the form of pills and lotions to help you receive a faster tan. Normally, these lotions or pills contain tyrosine, an amino acid. This stimulates production of melanin to speedup the tanning process. However, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) does not approve of these tanning lotions and drugs. Again, there is no conclusive medical evidence to assert their effects on melanin production.

Sunless tanning lotions, creams and other techniques do not offer you any protection from the sun. Therefore, even after receiving a tan through sunless tanning methods, you need to use proper sunscreens while venturing in the sun. Only sunscreens can protect you from the harmful effects of the sun's rays. Sunless tanning cannot override the benefits of tanning in the skin. Sunless tanning methods allow only minor skin penetration. Therefore, the effects of such tanning methods are also temporary and minor.

13. Comparison of Sunless Tanning Methods

Sunless Tanning helps you receive the needed shade of your skin color without spending many hours in the sun. But, sunless tanning products affect only the topmost layer of your epidermis. Therefore, sunless tan only gives a temporary tan. Such tanning does not cause any major internal infections or allergies.

There are various factors for the growing popularity of sunless tanning. Many people live in places without much sunshine. Taking an expensive holiday to get a tan is also not a viable option for many people. Sunless tanning overcomes such factors - you can get a tan without much inconvenience. Regular exposure to sunlight to get a tan can also lay you open to various skin problems and damage.

The different methods of sunless tanning are **sunless tanning lotions, sprays, tanning beds and tanning pills**. Each method of sunless tanning works differently and produces a tan, though the effect of some of them last longer than that of others. The main things you need to consider while choosing the appropriate sunless tanning method are cost, effectiveness, convenience and safety.

Comparison between Different Sunless Tanning Methods

Cost: The different sunless tanning methods are available for varied costs.

Of all the methods, tanning sprays are the cheapest. The difference in cost between tanning sprays and other sunless tanning methods is well over a hundred dollars. Spray tanning offers the best and cheapest way to attain a sunless tan.

You can use a manual spraying machine or you can visit a tanning salon and use airbrushes and sprayers to put the tanning solution

evenly on all parts of your body. Uneven application can produce streaks in your tan.

Tanning beds are the costliest option. If you want your own tanning bed at home, it could cost a lot, as you also need various accessories like tanning lamps, bulbs, etc.

Similarly, using tanning beds in tanning booths is fairly costly.

Effectiveness: Of the different sunless tanning methods, tanning beds are the most effective, offering the best tan which lasts for a longer time too.

Tanning sprays give you a tan which lasts for only five to seven days. You need to apply the spray carefully and evenly. Otherwise, your tan will smudge.

Tanning pills contain certain carotenoid pigments, which may be harmful to your health.

Tanning lotions also offer a temporary tan - you need to reapply the lotion every few days to maintain your tan.

Convenience: Tanning pills are the most convenient to use to get a tan. However, at the time of writing, the F.D.A. bans the use of such tanning pills because of reported side effects.

Tanning sprays and lotions are convenient to apply too. Tanning beds offer the convenience of tanning yourself at home. However, not many can afford the convenience of their own tanning bed at home.

Safety: The safest method of sunless tanning is through sprays and lotions.

Tanning beds tan your skin in almost the same way as you bask in the sun to get a tan from the ultraviolet rays of sunlight. Tanning beds use ultra-violet rays off tanning bulbs and lamps. Excessive exposure to

ultra-violet rays can cause premature aging, skin cancer and other skin ailments.

Therefore, although tanning beds are the most convenient, they offer the less safety than some other sunless tanning methods.

Among the different sunless tanning methods, spray tanning tops the overall score. Spray tanning offers you a great tan without many compromises on cost, safety, effectiveness or convenience.

However, before using spray tanning to get a tan, you should experiment with the different available sprays to check their relative suitability to your skin type.

14. Smart Sun Tanning - Avoid Effects of UV Rays

Sun tanning is popular with men and women of all ages. Recently, more teenagers are also joining the bandwagon. However, tanning in the sun means taking in all the ultraviolet rays of the sun.

Although ultraviolet rays offer the required tan, it can damage your skin. The color perceived by tanning may relate to the amount of damage that has been done or is in prospect for your skin and the cells within as a result of your direct exposure to the rays!

Therefore, smart sun tanning involves acquiring a good tan without affecting your skin very much. Sunlight reaches the earth in the form of UVA and UVB rays.

Of these, UVA rays are often the cause for skin cancer and can damage the DNA of your skin cells. UVB rays cause sunburns and associated redness.

So, you should try to get a tan while incurring the minimum effects of ultraviolet rays.

Sunless tanning is the best option to obtain a smart tan without having to suffer any effects of ultraviolet rays.

Tanning beds offer a good solution. Although tanning lamps and bulbs at tanning beds use ultraviolet rays, you can regulate the flow of ultraviolet rays and thereby reap the benefits of a tan with less side-effects of the ultraviolet rays.

Normal recommendations for using a tanning bed are to restrict the duration to only ten hours in a year. Ideally, sessions should last half an hour each. You can enjoy twenty such sessions in a year.

If you have greater inclination for a tan with exposure to sun, it is best to use a proper sunscreen. Normally, sunscreens should have a

minimum S.P.F. (Sun Protection Factor) factor of 15. Sunscreens with such a low SPF help you receive the tan without incurring much damage to your skin to a limited extent. Sunscreens may help to block the ultraviolet rays from harming the DNA of your skin cells.

Similarly, wear long skirts, full-sleeved shirts and pants to cover most parts of your body while out in the sun to play sports or even if you are on an outing. Sunglasses and rimmed hats offer additional protection.

If you are fair-skinned or have freckles on your face, be careful while venturing out in the sun. Similarly, if you develop sunburns easily, have many moles or if there is a family history of skin cancer, exercise additional precautions before going out in the sun.

Aloe and cocoa butter offers the best relief from sunburns. Aloe has a soothing action on your skin while cocoa butter helps maintain the softness and suppleness of your skin. Some people believe that it can help to repair some skin damage and reduce further damage to your skin due to peeling.

15. Sunless Tanning Products

There is a growing awareness of the harmful effects of ultraviolet rays, so many want to acquire a tan but without the help of the sun. Therefore, sunless tanning is a popular option. Sunless tanning products may help you to reduce some effects of ultraviolet rays of the sun.

There are a variety of sunless tanning products, which can help you to acquire a tan. The common ingredient to many sunless tanning products is dihydroxyacetone or DHA. This gives a dark brown shade to your skin.

Other ingredients are glucose, 6-ald-D-fructose, glyceraldehyde, erythulose and others that also can produce a lighter brown shading. Modern sunless tanning products do not harbor any smell or other unpleasant aspects. These products also have a high proportion of silicones, which may help to give an even tan.

There are various self-tanning products that you can use in your home. They do not have sufficient sunscreen protection for use outside.

You need to use a sunscreen of, at least, SPF 15 to safeguard your skin if you venture outside.

Different Sunless Tanning Products

These reviews are based on my own experience and feedback from friends and colleagues. They should not be taken as definitive. Your use of any of the products and the results you might obtain could be better or worse.

Always follow directions and warnings with care. Cease using any products like these at the first sign of any irritation or other problem. Consult your medical

practitioner before using them if you have any medical condition that might be affected by their use.

Clarins Sheer Bronze Tinted Self-Tanning for Legs- This is a combination of different suntan products for your legs and body. As this product contains oil, it might cause breakouts and irritation in some sensitive areas.

Neutrogena Instant Bronze, Sunless Tanner and Bronzer In One, Deep- This has a sunless tanner and a bronzer to give you the benefits of both. You get an immediate tan.

Fake Bake Self-Tanning Sheer Chocolate Mousse-This tanner provides a natural tan and the mousse dries within seconds. Your tan may last longer comparative to using some similar products.

Clarins Self-Tanning Milk SPF 6-This self-tanner provides a little amount of sunscreen. This light fluid offers an enticing tan.

St. Tropez Tanning Essentials Mousse Tanning System-This is a total tanning system, but a little more expensive than most. It includes a body polisher to remove dead cells and has a moisturizer and self-tanning mousse to give you what they call 'the perfect tan.'

Bio-Tan Sunless Tanning Gel-This gel combines amino acids and many different natural sugars to produce an excellent self-tanner. It has a moisturizer too. This is a costly gel. You need to reapply every three days as your tan may remain good for three days after a single application of this gel.

Coppertone Oil Free Sunless Tanning Lotion-You can apply this solution at bedtime to get an overnight tan. However, use dark sheets on your bed at night to avoid any stains.

Soleil Flash Bronzer Self-Tanning Face Gel Skincare by Lancôme- This easy-to-apply and non-greasy gel gives you a bronze tan within an

hour of application. The vitamin E content is claimed to prevent any damage to your skin.

Laura Mercier Bronzer-This is a facial tanner with an element of rose. It also adds a shine to your face.

Claris Radiance-Plus Self-Tanning Cream Gel-This is claimed to be one of the best self-tanning products. It offers a good bronze-colored tan with a nice smell. The tan can last for several days.

Chanel Perfecting Bronzer-This gives a golden tan to your neck, nose, cheeks, and forehead.

Estee Lauder Go Tan Towlettes for Face and Décolletage-This is available in small individually wrapped towlettes. You can therefore apply it quickly at any time to get an instant tan.

Phytomer Bronze Perfect-This gives a golden tan all over the face. It is non-sticky and has no odor.

You can use special face tanners for your face and use cheaper tans for other parts of your body. The DHA content of self-tanning products produces the brownish tan through reaction with amino acids in your body. Therefore, some of these gels do not produce instant coloring but have their effect within a few hours.

However, the color remains intact later and does not go away with washing. Fading of the color is gradual due to the natural processes of your skin cells. It may take five to six days for the color to vanish.

16. Sunless Tanning Product Lines Reviewed

Sunless tanning products offer the easiest option to achieve a tan without any exposure to the sun's rays. It is not an easy job to apply a sunless tanner. Therefore, it is best to exfoliate your skin before applying any sunless tanner. Exfoliation helps remove all dead cells and makes your skin smooth and soft.

Thereafter, application is easy as the base is natural and flat. Rough surfaces tend to hamper application of sunless tanners and give an uneven look so that your tan looks very unnatural.

Au Courant - This is a highly regarded company that supplies sunless tanning products. They offer a fine scented sunless tanner for use on your face - **Bronze Face Gel, Dark**. This light gel offers easy application and dries quickly too. It also helps in exfoliation of dead cells while tanning. This company also offers an **Instant Sunless Tanning Lotion**. This is slightly thicker for application but gives a good tan if your skin tone is light or medium. This lotion has a slight odor.

Au Courant also offers a tanning spray for self-application at home. The tan color looks natural and the spray contains alpha hydroxy acids. These leave you with a smooth skin. Such sprays help you reach and tan all parts of your body like your back as well.

Bain de Soleil- This company also offers a self-tanning product - **Soleil Streakuard Tinted Self-Tanner Foam**. This sweet-scented tanner allows easy application and seems to deliver a good colored tan. They offer different versions of the tanner for light and dark-skinned clients. However, some people may not like the color of the tan. There is a slight odor from the foam too.

Banana Boat Product Line - All sunless tanning products of this company are popular. These tanners are excellent moisturizers too

with liberal quantities of vitamins A and E. They have a mixed fragrance of mandarin and coconut. Rub on their lotion before application of tanner to keep your skin moist and get a better tan too. Those wanting a darker tan should not use their crème tanner.

You can achieve the best results by diluting the lotion with any moisturizer. This tanner has an SPF of only 4, so it does not offer sufficient protection against ultraviolet rays of the sun if you go out with the tanner on.

California North - Many people like their **Titanium Self-Tanner** for its easy application, good coloring, and easy fading, but they do not offer a dark tan version.

Clarins - Products of this company are a bit more costly than others. However, their tanners are good, sweet smelling and offer easy application.

Coppertone - Sunless-tanning products of this company provide a fast and lasting tan. You can receive a good tan if you exfoliate before application. Besides, a thin application is sufficient to yield a dark tan. The only drawbacks are that color seems to flow down and leaves stains. These tanning products also have a strong smell.

Lancôme - Tanning products of this company have high alcohol content and, therefore, could prove difficult for those with sensitive skin. Although it gives a good colored tan, it can leave behind a smell of alcohol. Many of the tanning products of this company show a flammable warning.

St. Tropez - This Company offers a total tanning kit with exfoliation, moisturizing, and tanning products. All products are light and have a sweet smell. They also offer a good tan. However, most products are costly and you need thick applications to acquire the required tan.

Tantowel - It is easy to use these towelettes to get a tan. The only drawback is that the coloring is very mild and you need many towelettes to get a good tan.

17. Sunless Bronzers and Tanning Booths

Sunless Tanning is popular and can help you to develop a tan without any exposure to the ultraviolet rays of the sun. Such a tan can look as natural as a regular suntan.

Sunless bronzers and Tanning booths can help you get such a tan easily.

Sunless Bronzers

Sunless bronzers are sunless tanning products available as lotions, powders, creams and moisturizers. Application of such bronzers is as simple as applying your regular make-up. Apply a particular shade to get the perfect tan. These offer a temporary stain, or tan, to your skin. However, you can easily wash them off with soap and water. Washing removes the tan too and you are back with your natural color and look.

You should exercise caution while applying sunless bronzers. These bronzers can stain your clothing. They can run down your face if wet. Check bronzers for sufficient sunscreen if you need to venture outside. Take adequate care by wearing proper sunglasses and full clothing for your body to prevent sunburns. Bronzers do not offer an even tan all over. They can only add a color to your skin.

Sunless Tanning Booths

These booths offer an easy solution to help you with your self-tanning. All such booths operate with an air compressor and airbrush delivery system through spraying machines present within the booths.

There are many pistons in the compressor to push air through a nozzle into the airbrush or spray head. These airbrushes have many compartments containing tanning solution. This solution contains

dihydroxyacetone (DHA). The compressor pushes air into the airbrush, which then sprays tanning solution on your body in an even manner.

Most tanning booths have as many as 36 airbrushes. Some are in a fixed position while some are in movable positions. You can use fixed airbrushes to get a full tan while moving airbrushes help you get a tan at specific body parts. Moving airbrushes often face many mechanical problems.

Airbrushes at tanning booths help you get a full body tan, even in difficult parts like your back, shoulders, and cheek edges. Normally, sprays and lotions in airbrushes do not contain any element of sun protection. So, get adequate protection for your skin before going out.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approves use of DHA for external cosmetic purposes only. Nevertheless, DHA is unusable in places around your lips or eyes and you should neither inhale nor ingest it. It is difficult to adhere to these requirements in a sunless tanning booth using spray-tanning methods like airbrushes. Hence, inquire if sunless tanning booths offer sufficient protection against inhalation or ingestion of the tanning spray before using these booths.

Part-IV: Sun Beds

18. Sun Beds

Sun beds give you an artificial tan with the help of ultraviolet rays. Sun beds use both UVA and UVB rays to tan your body. Emission of such ultraviolet rays can trigger production of endorphins in your body, which give you a high. Hence, some clients develop an addiction for sun beds.

Emission of ultraviolet rays from sun beds can cause skin cancer, as they may damage the DNA of your skin cells. Both UVA and UVB rays are equally harmful. Some research indicates a strong connection between the use of sun beds and incidence of malignant melanoma. It can be dangerous to use sun beds regularly.

Ultraviolet radiation can also cause premature aging, wrinkles and harm your immune system. You get an 'arc eye' if you use sun beds without proper goggles for your eyes. Nevertheless, many tanning booths and parlors use sun beds to give their clients a dark tan.

The World Health Organization does not approve the use of such ultraviolet rays and sun beds to get a tan. National health systems incur higher costs each year for screening, testing, and taking care of skin cancer patients.

19. Health Benefits of Using a Sun Bed

Sun beds are devices used to acquire a body tan. However, World Health Organization and other health organizations strongly oppose the use of sun beds for cosmetic purposes.

Sun beds use ultraviolet rays to give you an artificial tan. These ultraviolet rays can be very harmful and are a major cause in the increase in skin cancer, malignant melanoma, damage to DNA and other body immune systems. Therefore, sun beds can be very dangerous.

But, there is a positive aspect to sun beds where they are used in special medical cases. They can help in the treatment of certain skin ailments like psoriasis and dermatitis. Such treatment should be only under proper medical supervision and in an approved medical clinic.

Federal agencies do not allow use of sun beds in commercial tanning centers. You also cannot use sun beds at home to get a tan. Many are under the wrong impression that a tan using sun beds offers good protection to your skin from sunburns. This is not true.

Sun beds offer very little protection against sunburns. Such protection is equal to having a sun protection factor of just two or three. Again, many claim to develop a relaxed feeling due to use of sun beds. This is again a misconception.

20. Adverse Health Effects of Using a Sun Bed

Sun beds are a recent development, over the past two decades or so. Initially, Sun beds used only UVA rays. However, now both UVA and UVB rays are in use in sun beds. Both rays are harmful to your health.

Sun beds produce ultraviolet rays similar to the sun. However, the intensity of these rays is so high that, if you spend twenty minutes in a solarium on a sun bed, it equals spending four hours under the sun.

The ultraviolet rays are the main cause for occurrence of all types of skin cancer. The UVB rays contain certain carcinogenic elements. Besides, UVA rays also penetrate deep into your skin. This increases your chances of developing skin cancer and other types of cancer too.

Malignant melanoma is another risk for all those using sun beds to get a tan. This risk is higher if you start on a sun bed at a younger age, say in your teens. You have a 70% more risk of contracting melanoma than non-users of sun bed, if you use sun beds at times.

Although sunlight reaches you in different wavelengths as UVA and UVB rays, the ozone layer of the atmosphere distills a major part of these rays. However, there is no such distillation in sun beds and you bear the full burning from both UVA and UVB rays.

Normally, people using sun beds do not use any sun cream to safeguard against possible ultraviolet radiation. This can destroy the collagen layer of your skin. As a result, your skin sags and thins down, develops wrinkles, and your skin shows signs of premature aging.

Using sun beds for long periods is very harmful for your eyes. It often causes cataracts and other damage, like photo conjunctivitis and photokeratitis.

21. Should Sun Beds be Banned?

Sun beds are a recently developed means of getting a tan. Sun beds use ultraviolet rays to bring a change in the color of your skin. However, use of such rays can be extremely detrimental to your health. Ultraviolet rays destroy the quality and content of your skin and may lead to many serious ailments.

So, many believe that banning of sun beds can assure better health to all.

Most feel that tanning your skin lends it a healthy look. Some are willing to tan at any cost. The look and color of a tan can be a reflection of the damage done to your skin by ultraviolet rays of the sun or sun beds. These rays penetrate deep into your skin and can damage the gene composition (DNA) itself. Such damage may cause serious diseases like skin cancer, malignant melanoma, and cataract in eyes, reduced immune system, premature aging etc.

Another major point for consideration is that suntan acquired through tanning in the sun or sun beds gradually fades away. But, the damage done due to such tanning remains. It stays for your life and you face resultant ill health later.

Some of you may not feel the side effects of tanning immediately but they are sure to surface and haunt you.

You can opt for temporary tans through fake self-tanning lotions instead.

Hard Facts about Sun Beds

If you want a suntan through the use of sun beds, be aware of all benefits and health risks of sun beds too.

Sun beds can be a very dangerous option for tanning your skin. The effect of ultraviolet rays through sun beds is more harmful than from regular sunlight.

Normally, the ozone layer of the Earth's atmosphere distills a part of the sun's ultraviolet rays. Hence, ultraviolet radiation is less in sunlight.

Children under the age of sixteen and other fair-skinned people should avoid sun beds. Most fair-skinned people do not tan easily and, therefore, excessive exposure to acquire a slight tan proves extremely dangerous. They burn their skin instead. Similarly, freckles and moles on your skin are also dangerous if you try to get a tan through sun beds.

If you have a family history of skin cancer, then the probability of acquiring cancer of any kind through radiation of ultraviolet rays is higher.

Those on medications like antibiotics have an oversensitive skin, allergic to ultraviolet rays.

Health and Safety Executive guidelines assert that sun beds are detrimental to your health. However, if you do want to use sun beds, more than twenty sessions in a year is extremely risky. **Therefore, health organizations advocate banning of sun beds in solariums and tanning booths.**

The Debate Goes On

It is simple to advocate a ban of sun beds in health centers. Nevertheless, the fact remains that many private salons do use sun beds to offer a tan to their clients. People may move from regulated salons to unregulated and private salons to save money while acquiring their tan. This is still more dangerous.

Besides, staff at most such salons does not have the requisite training and knowledge of sun beds. Trying for a tan under ignorant and inexperienced hands is extremely hazardous. Therefore, it is essential to educate salon operators, staff, people and all other concerned individuals about sun beds and their detrimental effects.

Part-V: Prevention and Coping with Sunburn

22. First Aid Tips for Sunburn

Sunburns are first-degree burns due to overexposure to heat and sunlight. These make your skin soft and warm. Sunburns appear within few hours of excessive exposure and can appear until around twenty-four hours of exposure. You feel the maximum effect of such sunburns within two or three days.

Common symptoms of sunburns are redness and swelling in the region with pain and occasional blistering. Sunburns can cause nausea, headache, fever and fatigue. Blistering indicates that your skin suffers from serious burning deep within the surface of your skin, thereby hindering the release of fluids from cells of the lower skin layers. This also makes it susceptible to bacteria and other organisms. Administer first aid on seeing the first signs of sunburns.

First Aid Tips for Sunburns

- Take a cool bath but do not use cold water. Add a cup of Aveeno or other aloe vera-based products, moisturizers without alcohol or baking soda to the water. Use a soft towel to pat your skin dry.
- Do not use soap and scrub or shave your skin as it can dry it out, leading to more discomfort. Do not use any salts or bubble baths.

You can also apply cool aloe-vera products directly to the burns many times in a day to lessen pain and discomfort.

Do not apply any greasy substance like butter to sunburns. Apply cool compresses instead and avoid going out in the sun.

Do not pinch or squeeze water blisters. If they break on their own, remove skin parts, apply antibacterial ointment and cover with sterile

gauze. This prevents infection and speeds up the healing process. Use anesthetic products containing benzocaine. **Important Note: such topical anesthetics could also cause allergies in some people.**

Take a painkiller like ibuprofen, aspirin, acetaminophen, or naproxen to lessen your pain if it is okay for you to use.

- Drink cool fluids, and not cold ones, to hydrate your body. High protein foods can help repair your burnt-out tissues.

If you develop fever, nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, bleeding moles, uncontrollable itching, flaking or other ailments, contact your doctor immediately.

23. Do's and Don'ts of Safe Tanning

Sunbathing and tanning are favorite pastimes for many people. You can get a tan through natural basking in the sun or through application of sunless tanning lotions and other methods in salons or at your home. Follow these useful tips and take precautions to get a perfect tan without problems.

Dos of Safe Tanning

Start sunbathing by being in the sun for not more than half an hour on the first day. You can gradually increase your exposure by five or ten minutes each day. Gradual exposure can get you a good tan over a few days.

After sunbathing, wear clothes covering your full body to prevent any further exposure.

Use a good after-sun lotion on your skin. This moisturizes your skin and keeps your tan for a longer time.

- Apply sun-tanning products half an hour before you head outdoors for a tan. Re-apply every two to three hours. Even if the product is waterproof, re-apply after showering or swimming.
- Check your sun and sunless tanning products for a sufficient sun protection factor. Use sunscreens before trying for a tan. Reapply after two or three hours to prevent burning.

Regularly inspect your freckles and moles for any major or gradual changes. Serious changes like bleeding and bloating of moles need immediate medical attention.

Use tracer or tint to apply sunless tanner perfectly and evenly at all parts of your body. Otherwise, sunless tanner appears as streaks on

different parts of your body. Apply sunless tanning lotion in a circular manner.

Reapply sunless tanner after a day and follow with weekly applications to maintain your tan.

- Use a proper sponge applicator to apply sunless tanner on your knees, elbows, and other joints. Use proper gloves while applying your tanner on your body. Always wash your hands and fingernails thoroughly after application.
- Be careful with your fabrics while using sunscreen products that have agents like amino benzoic acid, lisadimate, padimate O or roxadimate to prevent yellowish stains.
- Follow the same precautions about eyewear, sunscreen lotions etc even while tanning in winter. Different surfaces like snow and water reflect ultraviolet rays of the sun.

Drink lots of water while sunbathing and tanning to maintain hydration levels in your body at normal levels.

Don'ts of Safe Tanning

If you develop a sunburn while sunbathing, do not have further tanning sessions. Allow sufficient time for your sunburns to heal totally before starting your tanning again.

Do not expose your skin to the sun without using sunscreen of a minimum of SPF 15.

Do not put babies below six months of age under the sun. Babies' skin is extremely sensitive and cannot bear the ultraviolet radiation of the sun's rays.

Do not use any petroleum or butter-based suntan lotions on your skin, as they cause your skin to burn. Do not apply any sunless tanning lotions directly to your joints. Apply a little gel or baby oil at elbows and knees to prevent it from becoming very dark. Otherwise, dilute

your application with a moisturizer and use small quantities while applying.

Do not risk your eyes by going out in the sun without proper protective eyewear like sunglasses offering 100% ultraviolet protection. These protect you against incidence of cataracts due to sun exposure. Sunglasses may leave a tan line. Therefore, you can use plastic coverings for eyes in tanning salons or even while tanning in the sun.

Do not use any sunless tanner without proper exfoliation first. This removes dead skin.

Do not let sunless tanner to accumulate between your toes or fingers.

Application gloves are essential to protect your fingers and palms from staining while applying sunless tanner.

Do not allow any water contact in places where you have applied sunless tanner until it dries. Wait for around two hours or so before showering or swimming. This prevents streaking.

Do not wear any clothes at these places for around half an hour to help sunless tanner dry and give you the tan.

- Do not shave immediately before applying sunless tanner. This could cause you irritation.
- Do not sunbathe between ten in the morning and four in the afternoon, as the sun's rays are the strongest during this period. Do not over-indulge in any outdoor activities during this time.

Do not apply sunless tanner on your palms, at the bottom of your feet, hairlines and similar places.

Do not consume alcohol or caffeinated drinks during tanning as they increase dehydration.

24. Skin Types and SPF

Your skin becomes thick and tough if you expose it to the harsh rays of the sun too much. Therefore, apply proper sunscreen lotions or creams before venturing into the sun. Sunscreens offer a certain amount of protection from the ultraviolet rays of the sun. This is SPF or Sun Protection Factor.

Every sunscreen has a particular number on it. Your skin has a particular capability to bear the sun's rays. Thereafter, it starts burning. If you apply sunscreen with a particular SPF, you can withstand that many times your normal sustainability. If your skin type starts burning within ten minutes, apply sunscreen with a minimum SPF of 15 to be able to withstand sun's rays.

Different skin types have different sun-bearing abilities. Therefore, you need sunscreens with different SPF's. Use broad-spectrum sunscreens as they offer protection against UVA and UVB rays. Apply a thick coating of sunscreen uniformly over your skin.

Babies: Do not expose babies below the age of six months to direct sun's rays. From six months onwards, babies need SPF of 15 or more to prevent sun tanning and burning.

Very Fair Skin Type: This skin type does not tan but starts burning very soon. Hence, the needed SPF is 20 or 30.

Fair Skin Type: This skin type also burns easily, although little tanning can occur. The needed SPF is from 12 to 20.

Light Skin Type: This skin type burns moderately. Tanning occurs gradually and generally only ends up into a light brown shade. Therefore, it requires sunscreen with at least an SPF from 8 to 12.

Medium Skin Type: This skin type burns around the minimum range. Tanning occurs moderately producing a brown tan. Therefore, use sunscreen with at least an SPF from 4 to 8.

Dark Skin Type: This skin type burns very rarely. Tanning occurs largely producing a dark brown tan. Use sunscreen with at least an SPF of 2 to 4.

Other Skin Types: People with cancer and melanoma in their family history, having many moles, or very fair skin and hair falling out are under this category. You need the highest SPF with minimum sun exposure, as your skin is overtly sensitive to ultraviolet rays of the sun.

25. Protect Yourself from the Summer Sun

Summer months help you live an active outdoor life without worrying about inclement or bad weather. You can go for long walks or maintain a regular exercise regimen. These months help you eat big meals and maintain a healthy lifestyle. Summer months help you really enjoy a great time outdoors.

However, summertime is not without any problems or dangers - its own set of difficulties and hazards. These useful tips can help you enjoy the summer season and protect yourself from the harsh summer sun:

Drink lots of fluids in the form of water and fresh juices. This helps maintain your body's hydration.

Avoid going outdoors between ten in the morning and four in the afternoon as the sun is at its hottest during this time. Plan your day and finish tasks accordingly.

Always wear a helmet while riding a bike to avoid the sun's direct rays on your head and to protect you from a head injury if you happen to crash.

Exercise during the early morning or late evening hours to escape the harshest heat. Otherwise, you could be a victim of heat exhaustion and dehydration. Exercises help you keep your body in shape and reduce incidence of many major disease like heart ailments. Sunshine also keeps depression at bay.

Cover your body fully by wearing shirts with full sleeves, full skirts, and pants. Wear loose garments that are tightly woven. Cover your head with broad-brimmed hats to offer sufficient protection to your forehead, face and the back of the neck too.

Wear sunglasses to shield your eyes from the sun's rays. Check the label for one hundred percent protection against ultraviolet radiation. Otherwise, such exposure could cause cataracts and other types of eye damage and problems.

Use sunscreens with an SPF of 15 or more to provide full protection to all parts of your body. Such sunscreens can offer protection from both UVA and UVB rays. Re-apply every two hours to maintain the protection level. Additionally, apply before and after swimming, playing, or exercising outdoors.

Be on the lookout for any sunburn on your skin. If you feel very hot or experience a burning sensation on your skin, go indoors to prevent any further damage to your skin.

Bacteria thrive best in warm weather. Therefore, do not leave food outside.

Cook all food thoroughly. Food poisoning occurs most during the summer months. Wash your hands thoroughly before touching any food. Wash hands after completing your meals too. Do not touch food items with your naked fingers. This can spoil the food.

26. Protect Yourself from the Winter Sun

Winter is a time when temperatures drop significantly but you still enjoy spending time outdoors in the sun. Most take special care to protect them from the harsh summer sun but the winter sun can also be harmful. You need to exercise caution while venturing outdoors during the winter months too.

The ultraviolet rays of the sun remain the same during the winter months. Although the sun's rays do not heat up the surface of the earth similar to the extent that it does in summer, heat is reflected from the snow and water surfaces. Reflection of these rays is equally harmful.

Therefore, you need to undertake few precautions in the winter months to protect yourself from the winter sun. Snow blindness and sunburns are possible during winter months. Cold temperatures cannot negate the effect of the ultraviolet rays of the sun.

Rather, snow at high altitudes magnify and intensify the effects. Therefore, you need sufficient protection against the winter sun too.

The US Environmental Protection Agency advocates the following tips to help get you over the winter months smoothly:

Restrict outings: The sun's rays are the strongest during 10 am and 4 pm. Restricting your outings during these peak hours can protect you from the sun's rays and ultraviolet radiation.

Full Clothing: It is best to cover your whole body during the winter months. You can wear thick clothing and clothe yourself fully to shield against the ultraviolet rays of the sun. A broad-brimmed hat can offer protection to your face and neck too.

Eye Protection: Ultraviolet radiation takes place during the winter months too. Therefore, wear sunglasses offering 99 to 100% protection against ultraviolet radiation. You can save your eyes from cataracts and other eye damage. Check the label before buying sunglasses.

Sunscreens: Sunscreens with relevant SPF according to your skin type ensures full protection to your skin while venturing outdoors in winter. Apply sunscreen every two hours and after swimming, playing, exercising, or working outdoors.

Plan your outdoor activities according to the UV index issued by weather services in different cities.

Part-VI: Frequently Asked Questions

27. Sun and Sunless Tanning FAQs

Why do people desire a tan?

People always want good looks and to maintain their appearance. They want to have good, pleasant features. Men prefer a muscular build with shiny hair and a good tanned skin. Women want to look beautiful with a good tanned skin and sharp features. Therefore, people desire to have a tan in any way that they can to improve their appearance.



What is UV radiation?

Sunlight reaches the earth's surface in the form of ultraviolet rays - UVA and UVB rays. These rays differ in wavelengths. UVA rays have longer wavelengths and therefore, penetrate deep into your skin. Even a little exposure to UVA rays can cause extensive skin damage. UVB rays have shorter wavelengths and affect the outer layers of your skin. These are popular as burning rays as they cause sunburns but they are equally dangerous.

What is the difference between a tan and sunburn?

UVB rays are responsible for sunburns. These rays strike just below the capillaries of your skin and burn your skin. UVA rays have longer wavelengths and these penetrate deep into your skin. This oxidizes melanin granules in melanocytes of your skin and produces a tan. However, UVB rays stimulate these melanin granules to come to the surface. This appears as a brown color, which is a tan.

What makes tanning beds safer?

UVB rays coming out of the tanning lamps and other sunless tanning equipment is supposedly only forty percent of that coming from the ultraviolet rays of sunlight. You can control the amount of heat

emitted if you know what you are doing and have knowledge of the equipment you are using.

Many tanning salons claim tanning beds to provide necessary vitamin D in your body. Vitamin D is essential to maintain calcium levels in your body. It helps in maintaining bones and muscles in good health. Tanning salons claim that it takes little radiation of ultraviolet rays to form the necessary amount of Vitamin D in your body through tanning beds. This is much less than that needed for acquiring a tan under the sun. Therefore, they claim tanning beds to be better than tanning in the sun.

What is the ultraviolet radiation through tanning lamps?

Tanning lamps and beds emit 93% to 99% ultraviolet radiation through UVA rays. Therefore, UVA rays through tanning lamps may produce a better tan than ultraviolet radiation through the sun's rays.

What are the harmful effects of tanning beds?

All research and medical tests into the effects of ultraviolet radiation at tanning booths and tanning beds indicate their direct link to occurrence of malignant melanoma, skin cancer, defective body immune system and other health problems. Medical research disclaim all theories of tanning booths and manufacturers of sunless tanning equipments.

The UVA rays of this sunless tanning equipment go deep into your skin and may destroy gene components. They can damage collagen and elasticity of your skin, causing wrinkles and premature aging. Although UVA rays do not cause sunburns, they destroy the innermost layer of your skin. This could also lead to tumors.

Is Tanning under the Sun Good?

Tanning under the sun means taking or absorbing ultraviolet rays of the sun. These rays can cause extensive damage to your skin and lead

to sunburns, premature aging, and other skin ailments as serious as melanoma and skin cancer. Tanning indicates possible damage to your skin as a brown color. Therefore, tanning is never good or safe, be it under the sun or without the sun.

Why do people still yearn and try for a tan?

Every year, the number of malignant melanoma cases in the United States shows an alarming increase. Besides, the condition of the patients is worsening. Thousands die each year due to malignant melanoma alone. Some instances of this disease could be from the tan you tried in your teenage years.

However, many people still yearn for a tan through sunless techniques or through tanning in the sun. This is due to lack of sufficient public awareness. Many people are still ignorant of the devastating effects of tanning. Although, previously, skin cancer and other diseases affected only the elderly, recently many teenagers and younger people are terminal cancer patients. A recent survey indicates that as many as 2.5 million teenagers use tanning bed equipments regularly. This is mainly due to ignorance and some peer pressure.

Which is the correct path to choose?

Sunless tanning equipment manufacturers vouch for the benefits of using such equipment. They also openly advocate tanning as beneficial to your health. They may be right, in a way, that indoor tanning or sunless tanning could be less harmful than tanning under the sun.

Nevertheless, the point of the discussion is that tanning in any form is harmful. It is regarded by some as one of the main causes of many occurrences of serious and fatal illnesses and diseases like cancer, malignant melanoma, eye problems, body immune system and other nervous disorders. Tanning can harm your vital organs.

Scientists and researchers show the alarming effects of ultraviolet radiation on your skin. Therefore, you should accept the claims of scientists as they provide conclusive evidence to all claims and occurrences.

Opting out of tanning of any kind is the ideal path to choose.

It's your health. Remember, all things in life should be taken in moderation. Without the sun, there would not be any life.

Respect the sun.

Enjoy those warm and wonderful days; keep yourself protected with proper clothes, sunscreen and a sun hat. Eat fruits and vegetables to keep balanced electrolytes. Drinking too much water and perspiring can deplete your body of salt and potassium.

Do not let "popularity" decide what you do to care for yourself now and in the future. Make smart decisions.

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